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Meeting with Advisory Committee on Public Law 480¹ (Section 104 n.) on 8 Dec

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Monday, November 16, 1959

Present:

Representing Other Federal Agencies:

Mr. Scott Adams and Mr. Sievers,
Office of Science Information Services,
National Science Foundation

Miss Estelle Brodman, National Library
of Medicine

Mr. Leo Goodman, Department of State

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CIA

Mr. Foster Mohrhardt, Department
of Agriculture Library

Representing Other Groups:

Dr. F.H. Burkhardt, American Council
of Learned Societies

Mr. John Dawson, American Library
Association

Mr. William Dix, Association of
Research Libraries

Mrs. Ruth Hooker, Special Libraries
Association

Professor Julius Marke, Association of
American Law Libraries

Representing Library of Congress:

Dr. L. Quincy Mumford
Librarian of Congress

Mr. Rutherford D. Rogers
Chief Assistant Librarian

Mrs. Marlene D. Morrisey
Executive Assistant to the Librarian

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Representing Library of Congress: (continued)

Dr. Roy P. Basler
Director, Reference Department

Mr. Lewis C. Coffin
Assistant Director, Processing Department

Mr. William Rossiter
Deputy Chief, Office of Fiscal Services

Mr. Robert Stevens
Coordinator of the Development and
Organization of the Collections

Mr. William Welsh
Administrative Officer, Processing Department

Summary of the Discussion:

The Librarian welcomed the group and thanked the representatives for their willingness to explore with the Library some of the problems involved in planning a program under Public Law 480 (Section 104 n.). At Mr. Rogers' request, Mr. Coffin reviewed developments to date, commencing with the meeting of this group on October 1, 1958 (for the purpose of considering the scope of the program) and culminating in the indication in the Senate Report on the request for fiscal 1960 (No. 597, July 31, 1958) that the proposal should be resubmitted (in January 1960) for fiscal 1961. Accordingly, the Library has followed the required steps, in cooperation with the Bureau of the Budget and the Department of State. The Library recognizes the interest of other groups in this program, which is designed to be of benefit to library and scholarly programs in this country generally. Time limitations not imposed by the Library and the confidentiality of budget estimates until they are made public through formal transmittal of the budget to the Congress (in January) prevent discussion of the program in detail. The planning of last year's proposal, Mr. Rogers explained, necessarily had to take into consideration such special problems as the limitation of certain facilities abroad, the relation of certain aspects of the proposed program to the United States' broad mission in specific parts of the world, and the extent to which a large-scale program of this kind can be developed simultaneously in various locations. This latter consideration in particular has argued for concentration at least in the initial stages on two basic operations -- i.e. the acquisition of materials and the cataloging of them abroad (thus making use of linguistic abilities less easily available in this country). A further essential consideration has been the Library's inability to absorb in its regular budget administrative overhead for any such special undertaking, and the necessary inclusion in last year's proposal of allowances for this purpose. As indicated in Senate Report No. 597, mentioned above, all agencies have been directed to specify the

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dollar amounts they will require to administer such programs. Mr. Adams mentioned, too, the concern on the part of some to have offsets made that would result in savings to our Government. If the program is approved, the Library would hope to be able to present it in the field; a survey operation would seem in order for each country involved to determine more precisely the extent to which acquisition, cataloging and related functions can be carried on in foreign areas either on a contractual basis or with bi-national staffs under L.C. direct supervision. Planning has included designation of the number of sets (i.e. complete current printed production) to be obtained in a particular area and some provision for photoduplication of materials. Multiple copies would be involved, and purchase of older materials would not be precluded, although immediate concern would probably be directed toward the acquisition of all current printed materials. While it is recognized that eventually other related operations, such as extensive abstracting, might be undertaken also, it is believed that at the beginning at least the emphasis should be given to acquisition of publications needed for scholarly research in this country. Comment was made on the importance of ascertaining the degree of use now being made of the materials already available, a point of which agencies are well aware.

Turning to the question of recipients of materials that might be brought in under this program, it was the general consensus of the meeting that the Librarian of Congress should name a small committee (including representatives of the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, the Association of Research Libraries, and perhaps one or two others) to recommend to the Library a general formula or plan for the distribution of materials. The allocations under Farmington Plan (which involved assignment to institutions of responsibility to collect comprehensively in a specific subject field or in a specific area) could be of some use perhaps in such distribution planning. The area study programs already underway in colleges and universities and those that may be yet in the planning stage need to be taken into account as well as the size and location of collections already available. Information concerning the categories of publications to be acquired would be useful in setting up a suggested distribution plan, it was pointed out. Some provision probably should also be made to permit first recipients to pass on materials they do not need to other institutions where they would be more useful. Representatives from non-Federal agencies spoke also of the possible importance of a carefully planned, acceptable distribution plan in connection with final action on the proposal. Among the anticipated questions that might arise would undoubtedly be some of the following: Are these materials really available now in adequate quantities? Are these materials really desired and needed by those to whom it is planned to distribute materials? To what degree do these recipients already have access to these resources?

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Because this program is of high value to the public interest, representatives of the outside groups expressed their concern about the importance of getting it into operation and assured the Librarian of their desire to help in any appropriate way. The Librarian again thanked the group for its interest and indicated that the Library would be glad to have further suggestions as they may occur to members of this advisory body. He stressed the fact that the proposed undertaking has been planned with a view to augmenting and strengthening the cultural and scientific resources of this country.

The session concluded with the understanding that the Librarian would name a special subcommittee to advise him on distribution (perhaps a preliminary report could be submitted to him by the end of December).

MM

November 17, 1959

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